

# Baseball and Those Who Make It--Players Who Earn as Much as the Vice-President--Greatest Game Because Cleanest



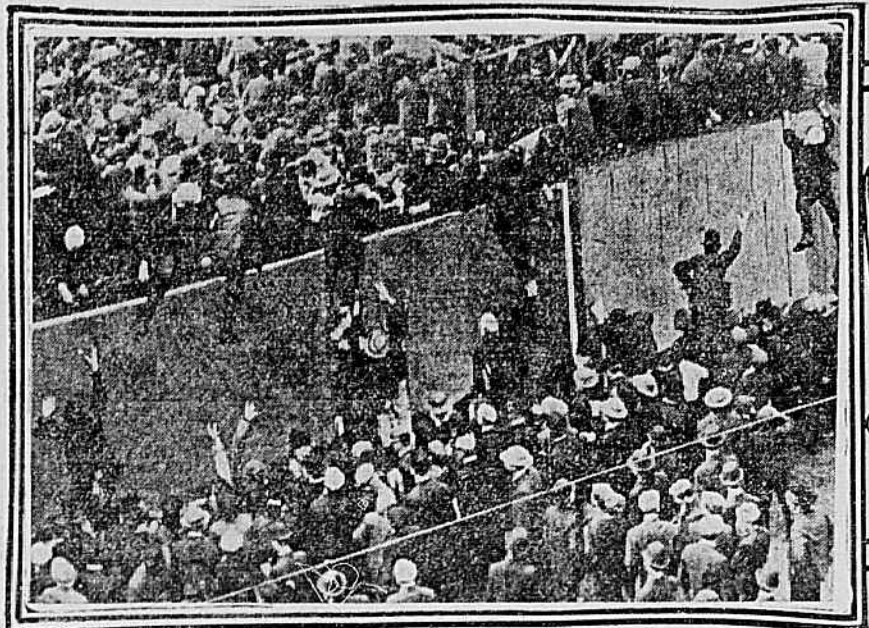
THOMAS J. LYNCH,

WAGNER, WHO GETS \$10,000 A YEAR. New President of the National League.

THE GREAT TY COBB,

BAN JOHNSON,  
President of the American League.  
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LAJOIE DRAWS \$12,000 PER SEASON.



RISKING LIFE, LIBERTY AND LIMB TO SEE THE GAME.



A GROUP OF FANS.

BY JOHN ELLFRETHER WATKINS.

"Lives there a man with soul so dead  
But he unto himself has said,  
My grandmother shall die to-day,  
And I'll go see the Giants play?"

Upon the basis of returns from office  
fboys and under clerks it may be estimated that, despite the greater salubrity of the climate within the warmer months of the year, practically all American grandmothers give up the ghost 'twixt mid-April and early October, and that in each locality the heaviest grandmother mortality, by tenfold, occurs upon the day of the initial game

upon the home grounds. Of course the unadorned, unqualified word "game" can mean but one thing when used anywhere within the shadow of the Stars and Stripes.

Lately, when one of the major baseball leagues elected a president, one of the most popular sporting sheets in the country heralded him as the man who had attained the office second in importance to that of President of the United States. And in the obituary of a star of the diamond whose light recently went out were printed these words: "He has taken the trail whence there is no return to the higher class leagues." These two samples of baseball journalism give the point of view of the average "fan" with whom, rather than for whom, the successful sporting editor thinks.

**Fans Die from Grief and Joy.**

As a thriller the national game is far more potent than the drama, even that of the blood-and-thunder brand. At Chicago last August a man named Myers dropped dead from excitement over a home run made at a crucial moment by a player on the team for which the enthusiast was "rooting."

Excitement over a good play at Elizabeth, N. J., a few weeks before had caused a spectator to be overcome with convulsions, and some time before this, one Rusk, an enthusiastic "rooter" of Des Moines, poisoned himself and dropped dead on the grounds as a result of grief over the defeat of the home team. Unpopular decisions of umpires have caused riots to occur at recent games in New York, Brooklyn, Augusta, Ga., and Jackson, Miss.

To gauge the people's interest in their favorite pastime we need simply glance at the figures. Eight million tickets were sold last year to the games of the American and National Leagues—and these are only two of the thirty-three professional leagues of the land. Here was sold a major league ticket for every American boy between seven and sixteen, inclusive. Here was one also for every man, woman and child in New York State.

**A City on One Stand.**

At Pittsburgh a crowd of 31,000, equaling the total number of school boys in the city, witnessed the game in the world's championship series, October 9 last, between the Pittsburgh Nationals and the Detroit Americans. This vast throng congregated about one amphitheatre contained as many males as there are in the permanent population of a city like Des Moines, Hoboken or Springfield, Mass. At the seven games of that series there were sold enough tickets for all the people of Denver. To see the New York Nationals play last year people bought 782,700 tickets, or enough to go around among all of the male population of Chicago or all of the school boys of the whole State of Illinois.

In all, 272 professional clubs play baseball in the United States. Sixteen of these belong to the two major leagues and the remaining 256 to thirty-three minor leagues. All of these professional clubs are governed by what is termed the national board of commission, which is the tribunal of last resort in all disputes involving contract obligations and the disposal of players. Now the reader at once wishes to know, of course, why the major and minor leagues need be united under any such national tribunal. The reason appears simple enough when it is understood that the magnates of the major league clubs are always sifting and searching the minor league clubs for talent, which is being tempted away by higher salaries. Often and often again these promotions from a minor to a major league are complicated by contract entanglements, and hence there must be some central body which all the leagues agree to respect. This body, the national board of commission, settles

also such disputes between clubs of the same league and it is empowered to punish by fine or blacklist players convicted of a breach of contract. Those blacklisted in one of the united leagues cannot be employed in another. He is a hopeless outcast from legitimate professional ball until he can get all of the club owners of his own league to pardon him.

Thus, you see, professional baseballism is governed by laws as iron-clad and as strictly enforced as the laws of the nation. First, in order to come into any of the major or minor leagues a city or town must purchase the franchise of a city or town already in the league. None of the players need be citizens of the city whose name the club bears, but the "home grounds" must be a park in that city. All of the thirty-three minor leagues are bound together by the National Association of Minor Leagues. Eight of the major clubs are included in the National League and the other eight in the American League.

**The League Presidents.**

The presidents of these two major leagues are magnates of vast power and influence in the sporting world, men whose names are in the papers every day and who are in command of a large army of employees.

A new president will have command of the National League during the coming season. This is Thomas J. Lynch, a native of New Britain, Conn., who began his professional career as an umpire in the New England League in 1884, who was the same year called to do like service in the Eastern League and who in 1886 became one of the umpires of the great major league of which he is now president. He thus served for eight years earning a reputation for absolute honesty, and in 1894 when chosen to umpire all of the games after the first of the Temple cup series between New York and Brooklyn he was known as the "king of umpires." For that series alone he received \$800. Since leaving the league he has been a theatrical manager in his home town, New Britain. He is an austere-looking man of about fifty, with a short cropped mustache and piercing eyes. His salary is \$10,000. A United States Senator receives only three-fourths as much.

The new president is a born "fan." Some claim to have it direct from the cradle that his first spoken words were what sounded mightily like "Play ball!" Before the days of the mitt he broke several of his youthful fingers catching bare-handed back on the vacant lots of New Britain. After he gave up umpiring he promised his wife he would leave the game alone, but he could not entirely resist, and of late years he has spent most of his summer evenings in vacant lots, horse-racing the games of the younger genera-

tion. It is related that last summer, when the big New Britain team was tied by its hated rivals, the Hartford, Lynch was appealed to and agreed to become bench manager for a week or two.

Thus he spent his vacation, with the result that his home team took thirteen games in a row. He was now in his element, telling each man who went to the bat when to strike, when to sacrifice and when to bunt—how to play "inside ball." But his discipline became so rigid that some of the players got to sulking, with the result that they lost three games running. Then Lynch quit them in disgust. To keep his candidacy quiet the league magnates who wanted to elect him their president in December brought him to New York by a telegram which sounded like theatrical business. Suspecting a broken contract, he arrived in the metropolis as mad as a hornet, and the magnate who met him nearly had his head taken off before he could break to the surprised Mr. Lynch that he was wanted to head the National League.

The other great league president is B. B. (Ban) Johnson, of the Americans. He is one of the long list of newspaper men, like William H. Locke, Harry Pulliam and Thomas C. Noyes, who have become baseball magnates. Mr. Johnson's first connection with the game was while baseball writer for the Cincinnati Commercial. Next he became president of the old Western League.

The organization of each professional club is an undertaking much more serious and expensive than the average "fan" realizes. In the first place the term "nine" is a gross misnomer, so far as the actual number of players is concerned. One major league club, which may be taken for an example, has enlisted not nine, but nine and twenty players for the coming season. The list includes four catchers, eleven pitchers, seven infielders and seven outfielders.

The pay roll of the average club is \$60,000 a season, while its railway and hotel bills will total \$200,000. The salaries of ordinary players vary from \$3,000 to \$4,000, although quite a number get \$5,000 and above.

**Player With Cabinet Salary.**

The highest salary ever paid a professional player is \$12,000 a year, said to be given to Napoleon Lajoie, the celebrated second baseman of the Cleveland Americans, and this high figure is alleged to be secured by a three-year contract, commencing last year. John Henry Wagner, the great shortstop of the Pittsburgh Nationals, receives \$10,000, and Ty Cobb, the young right fielder of the Detroit Americans, who is now the bright particular star upon the ascendant in the American League, has a three-year

contract for \$9,000 per year. Mathewson, of the New York, and Mordecai Brown, of the Chicago, the two great pitchers of the National League, are believed to receive \$6,000 a year or over, while men of the calibre of Cy Young draw \$5,000.

Here is the salary of the Vice-President of the United States, of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and of a member of the Cabinet paid to a second baseman for playing ball six months in the year, and here again is a shortstop drawing, for a half year's work, the salary of the chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission. And "Ty" Cobb will receive more for playing his part in the national game than General Leonard Wood will receive for commanding the army of the United States.

Nor do these high salaries necessarily represent all that the successful players receive. Those belonging to pennant winning teams get a bonus. Thus after last year's world's championship series the players' share of the gate receipts was divided on the basis of 60 per cent. to the winners and 40 per cent. to the losers. This gave Wagner and each fellow member of the victorious Pittsburgh team \$1,825 and Cobb with his brothers of the Detroit team \$1,275, in addition to salary.

Wagner thus earned \$11,825 in six months.

Many professional players are saying the best part of their pay and are accumulating comfortable fortunes as old farmers, while two have invested in oil wells. Some after retirement have purchased the home grounds and rented them to the local magnate. And this item of rental is no mean one. The Philadelphia Nationals under the new lease signed with Mrs. C. F. Taft, new lease signed with Mrs. C. F. Taft, will have to pay for their home park \$17,500 a year for the next four years and \$20,000 a year thereafter. Considering all of these high figures, it is no wonder, then, that we have to pay as much to see the home team wallop as we do to enjoy the greatest actors on our stage.

And, speaking of baseball parks, it may be added that those of to-day rival the great amphitheatres of the Romans. The new amphitheatres of the National League in Philadelphia sent 24,000 people, and see the game. There is room in either of these for the total population of a good sized city such as Augusta, Wheeling or Honolulu, while there are seats for all of the people of a centre like Austin, Texas, or a promenade, restaurant, club-rooms, baths and a great garage hold-



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**Baseball "Slave Trade."**

But let us revert to the question of salaries and contracts, and consider for a moment quite a new problem absorbing the attention of the professional players. In the California Senate sits a man named a San Francisco and ex-baseball player. He has lately been fighting for re-election and one of his campaign issues has been "anti-baseball slavery." He has been promising, if re-elected to introduce into the Legislature a bill based upon his original contract. Recognizing that if this bill were passed and upheld by the Federal courts, this agitation will spread all over the country, the sporting journals have already taken up the problem and some are advising for their coming issues feature articles on the subject.

Now even the casual reader with no pretensions toward being a "fan" is familiar with the terms "bought" and "sold" as appearing almost daily upon the sporting page. Thus he read some time ago that the Cleveland team had "bought" Cy Young from the Boston team for \$17,500.

In Washington there used to be a house painter with a skull of tremendous diameter. He wore something like a No. 15 hat. At any rate, an enterprising doctor came along and bought his skull for \$1,000, and the story goes, at least, that the doctor, after the man's death, turned the skull over to the doctor after the funeral. But before the man died the doctor sold his rights to the skull to another doctor, while this second one sold it to a third medical genius, and so the doctor's head got upon the market, painter's head got upon the market, where its price is said to have risen to \$5,000. This is the alleged price paid for it by the ultimate purchaser, although the man's heirs only got \$1,000.

It is the same way with Cy Young and the rest of the baseball stars who get upon the market except that their limbs and bodies are sold along with their heads, and the trading is done while the life is still in them. Although the great player's salary fixed by contract may be only \$5,000, another club may offer \$17,500 for it. It is turning of the contract so drawn that the player can be transferred, like so much stock, and without being consulted. Some players, complaining of this condition, maintain that they are always in danger of being sold to work amid distasteful surroundings, perhaps a fact, little better off than the ante-bellum negro.

Some of the magnates, on the other hand, have replied that the professional player has a happy life of only six months' work out of the year and four times the salary that he could earn otherwise; that his work is play, and that he is a pampered and petted individual, who rides in Pullmans and is put up at the best hotels.

**Costs Us Over \$5,000,000 a Year.**

Some one has estimated that we are paying \$5,000,000 a year for professional baseball, and the estimate is based upon the sale of 25,000,000 tickets a year. This is probably an understatement. At any rate there may be added hundreds of thousands of dollars paid for baseball literature. Besides score cards, programs and guide books, there is an enormous sale in the land of journals devoted to the sport, not to mention the "baseball extras" of the evening papers. Every day a paper, morning and evening, employs a correspondent to sit in the press box and report the game whenever there is a contest upon the home field. No class of men are more thoroughly "written up" than the baseball stars, and in recent years more columns have been devoted to the ball than to who wrote a essay at the Boston, that to the war correspondents over the authority of Shakespeare's plays, the Declaration

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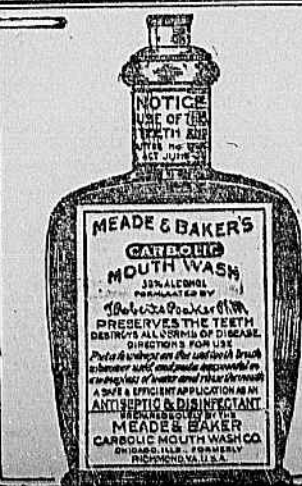
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